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“The Irish Warrior”



Isn't it funny how we twist some holidays to make them fun to celebrate without knowing why we celebrate them or why they even exist in the first place? Last month on 17th of March, we celebrated St. Patrick's Day. When many think of St. Patrick's Day they think of a Leprechauns and a rainbow with a pot of gold, wearing something green to avoid getting pinched or maybe drinking the green beer that is served in Irish pubs all around the world. These are all fun things to do, but why is there really a St. Patrick's Day?

St. Patrick was born in Britain to wealthy parents near the end of the fourth century. He is believed to have died on March 17, around 460 A.D.

Although his father was a Christian deacon, it has been suggested that he probably took on the role because of tax incentives and there is no evidence that Patrick came from a particularly religious family.

At the age of 16, Patrick was taken prisoner by a group of Irish raiders who were attacking his family's estate. They transported him to Ireland where he spent six years in captivity. (There is some dispute over where this captivity took place. Although many believe he was taken to live in Mount Slemish in County Antrim, it is more likely that he was held in County Mayo near Killala.)

During this time, he worked as a shepherd, outdoors and away from people. Lonely and afraid, he turned to his religion for solace, becoming a devout Christian. (It is

also believed that Patrick first began to dream of converting the Irish people to Christianity during his captivity.)

After more than six years as a prisoner, Patrick escaped. According to his writing, a voice—which he believed to be God's—spoke to him in a dream, telling him it was time to leave Ireland. To do so, Patrick walked nearly 200 miles from County Mayo, where it is believed he was held, to the Irish coast.

After escaping to Britain, Patrick reported that he experienced a second revelation—an angel in a dream tells him to return to Ireland as a missionary. Soon after, Patrick began religious training, a course of study that lasted more than 15 years. After his ordination as a priest, he was sent to Ireland with a dual mission—to minister to Christians already living in Ireland and to begin to convert the Irish.

(Interestingly, this mission contradicts the widely held notion that Patrick introduced Christianity to Ireland.)

Familiar with the Irish language and culture, Patrick chose to incorporate traditional ritual into his lessons of Christianity instead of attempting to eradicate native Irish beliefs. He used bonfires to celebrate Easter since the Irish were used to honoring their gods with fire.

He also superimposed a sun, a powerful Irish symbol, onto the Christian cross to create what is now called a Celtic cross, so that veneration of the symbol would seem more natural to the Irish.

Although there were a small number of Christians on the island when Patrick arrived, most Irish practiced a nature-based pagan religion. The Irish culture centered on a rich tradition of oral legend and myth. When this is considered, it is no surprise that the

story of Patrick's life became exaggerated over the centuries—spinning exciting tales to remember history has always been a part of the Irish way of life.

This holiday observance was once a religious feast day and the anniversary of his death in the fifth century. The Irish have observed this day as a religious holiday for thousands of years.

On St. Patrick's Day, which falls during the Christian season of Lent, Irish families would traditionally attend church in the morning and celebrate in the afternoon. Lenten prohibitions against the consumption of meat were waived and people would dance, drink, and feast—on the traditional meal of Irish bacon and cabbage.

Today, St. Patrick's Day is celebrated by people of all backgrounds in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Although North America is home to the largest productions, St. Patrick's Day has been celebrated in other locations far from Ireland, including Japan, Singapore, and Russia.

Just like St Patrick made a difference for his people, Soldiers get asked to make a difference for our citizens and our country. Today, we are making a difference for the Iraqi people by providing freedoms which they have never had before as well as protecting our country from terrorism. Thank you and God Bless you for making a difference.